

Shmanners 441: Shmidgerton, Part 1

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[theme music plays]

Travis: Hello internet! I'm your husband host, Travis McElroy.

Teresa: And I'm your wife host, Teresa McElroy.

Travis: And you're listening to *Shmanners*.

Teresa: It's extraordinary etiquette...

Travis: For ordinary occasions. I forgot for a second.

Teresa: [laughs] Okay. I was—

Travis: 'Cause—

Teresa: I was wondering.

Travis: 'Cause—

Teresa: 'Cause you looked at me.

Travis: Well, 'cause— So we wanted to do somethin' fun, frivolous, maybe a little bit, I don't know, entertaining.

Teresa: But still apropos to our show.

Travis: So this week we're talkin' *Bridgerton*.

Teresa: And—

Travis: *Smidgerton*, if you will.

Teresa: And we've done a little bit of this, we've done a little bit throughout Regency balls episode.

Travis: Tee-hee. [laughs]

Teresa: [chuckles] And our Jane Austen episodes.

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: And our dowry episodes, things like that.

Travis: But the reason I forgot.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: Is 'cause I just said like, "*Talking Bridgerton, Talking Bridgerton*," and then I was like, "And you're listening to *Talking Bridgerton*"—

Teresa: No, no.

Travis: — is what I thought about saying.

Teresa: That's not our show.

Travis: I was like that's not it. So we're gonna be talking primarily about season one, so spoilers ahead, if you haven't watched it.

Teresa: It's four years old, so.

Travis: But I'm willing to bet the overlap, the Venn diagram of people who enjoy this show and who have watched *Bridgerton* is probably pretty high.

Teresa: Yeah, it's a complete circle, I think.

Travis: We'll also be talking about like the context, the themes.

Teresa: No, stuff.

Travis: And culture and history and stuff.

Teresa: You guys, you listeners may not know, I'm sure you do, but we also do a *British Bake Off*, *Bake On*.

Travis: It's called *Bake On*.

Teresa: It's called *Bake On*.

Travis: And the show is *Bake Off*.

Teresa: Right.

Travis: Do you get it?

Teresa: And so—

Travis: Our daughters often ask us these questions—

Teresa: [chuckles]

Travis: — of like when we tell 'em something and they're like, "Why is that?" and then like we tell 'em the show's called *Bake On*, and they're like, "Why?" and I'm like, "Because the show's called *Great British Bake Off*, so it's like *Bake On*."

And then kids have this way of reacting to something where they go like, "Oh okay," and you're like, "Well now I feel embarrassed. [chuckles] Now I feel silly."

Teresa: In any case, this is going to be in that sort of style. We did watch all of *Bridgerton* that's available, we did watch it all together.

Travis: Yes, this is correct.

Teresa: But it's not— This isn't like a recap.

Travis: Yeah, we'll be going over it—

Teresa: It's more of—

Travis: — but we're not doing like beat by beat. This isn't like my *Yellowstone* book report, if you guys watched that.

Teresa: [laughs] Now that Venn diagram I don't know about.

Travis: No, hopefully—

Teresa: I don't think— [chuckles]

Travis: — a Venn diagram between people who enjoy anything we make—

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: — and people who sincerely enjoy *Yellowstone*, I bet it's a sliver, a small sliver. So... Give me some background, before we start talking about it.

Teresa: Okay, so—

Travis: First of like the books.

Teresa: Okay. I have read one of the books. But the books are about 20 years old at this point.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: There is one book for each Bridgerton sibling.

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: They are name—

Travis: The Bridgerton's are, in case you don't, know so they have what eight kids?

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: And they're in alphabetical order.

Teresa: Yes, so Anthony.

Travis: Uh-huh.

Teresa: Benedict.

Travis: Yes.

Teresa & Travis: [simultaneously] Colin.

Teresa: Daphne, Eloise... Francesca.

Travis: Uh-huh.

Teresa: Gregory and Hyacinth.

Travis: Okay, great.

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: Hyacinth, who ends up being nine feet tall.

Teresa: I suppose.

Travis: So— She's so tall by season three. Anyways.

Teresa: Anyway.

Travis: And none of them are married at the beginning.

Teresa: At the beginning of the series, correct.

Travis: Yes. And we have Violet, who is their mother.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: Who is the dowager of the Bridgerton Estate, because her husband, their father, has passed away before the events of the show.

Teresa: Well technically you're not a dowager until the succession has continued. So—

Travis: But he's become the lord. Once... He's Lord Bridgerton.

Teresa: But— Yes, he is Lord Bridgerton, Anthony. When her husband Edmund, the viscount, dies, Anthony succeeds him. But she is still considered Lady Bridgerton, the viscountess.

Travis: Oh okay, so I'm thinking of it by the end of the—

Teresa: Right, until he marries, until Anthony marries, Violet is still the Viscountess.

Travis: Okay, so the books are 20 years old.

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: And... Teresa in— is— I hope you don't take this as me judging, is more hyper-fixated on *Bridgerton* than I do, so I will be referring to your expertise a little bit more. And I right in thinking that the books and the TV show vary greatly?

Teresa: Yes. For several reasons. First of all, like I said, the books are 20 years old.

Travis: Mm-hmm.

Teresa: And then also because they don't translate one to one to television because of the writing style. So the way that the books are written, I can't remember if there's a specific literary term, but it is third person omniscient.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Meaning that we say, "He said, she said, she thought," things like that. But we are—

Travis: But it's not written from the perspective of like a person who was there at the events living through them. They know— The narrator in the books knows what everybody's thinking.

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: That the deal, right? Because the narrator... is inside everybody's head, right? So it doesn't lend itself to television very well because there's no tension, really.

Travis: Right.

Teresa: I read the book and I don't know what's going to happen, but I do know what everyone is thinking and what everyone is saying.

Travis: Right. And am I also right in thinking Queen Charlotte's not in the book?

Teresa: No. Well because that's a historical anachronism in the show. Queen Charlotte was alive for some of it. For some of the Regency, but she wasn't for a lot of it.

So what they're talking about is the Regency period where... the Prince of Wales takes over for King George, his father. Before that all happens, right. Queen Charlotte is not like a figure in this— in these books. So like okay. Lady Danbury.

Travis: Mm-hmm.

Teresa: Provides a lot of the services in the books that we see the Queen doing. For example, the tension with Lady Whistledown, who is a scandal writer.

Travis: Mm-hmm. And the narrator for the show.

Teresa: And the— Yes, in the show, yes. Well, the narrator?

Travis: She is, yeah.

Teresa: Hmm.

Travis: She narrates. We get voiceover.

Teresa: Yes, I would say— But It's not really narration because she is reading the scandal sheet that she has written. She's not narrating events, she is—

Travis: This is true, but they use it as the convention of like... the narrat— the voiceover we get is often reacting to what we see happening in the scene.

Teresa: Yes, because she is describing events.

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: In the scandal sheet that have happened, that are happening.

Travis: That will have been, did happen.

Teresa: [laughs] But anyway, Lady Danbury, who is a dowager, widowed... She had Countess.

Travis: Well she's Lady Danbury, so she's a lady, right?

Teresa: Yeah, but she has— I can't remember what her title is.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Anyway, she for example is kind of the impetus behind finding out who Lady Whistledown is, she is the one who posts a \$1000 reward.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: For finding out Lady Whistledown. \$1000, £1000.

Travis: You get it.

Teresa: Did I say dollar? I meant pound.

Travis: You get it. Okay, so let— so in the show.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: There's a basic structure of the show. It is mostly focused on the Bridgertons who are a very... successful's not the right word, but influential, rich... very public, right? Everybody talks about their family.

Teresa: They seem to be the ideal.

Travis: Right.

Teresa: That everyone seems to strive for.

Travis: And so it's mostly focused, each season is like one of the siblings, one of the children, is going to get married, right?

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: And so then we have Lady Whistledown, who as you said is like a scandal writer. Who is it? What's going on? Who's writing these things? And the impact of Lady Whistledown's writing... has no bounds, right?

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: The influence is the situation, and what we get in the show is a lot of the conflict in the first season revolves around like Queen Charlotte seeing Lady Whistledown as a rival of influence.

Teresa: Right.

Travis: Of like it used to be Queen Charlotte was like, "This person's good, this match is bad, I like this family," that was what swayed the whole Ton.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: And then when Lady Whistledown came in, Lady Whistledown will often question like Queen Charlotte's judgment, and make comments about it that Queen Charlotte's like, "I need to find out who this is and put a stop to it."

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: Now my first question is what's a Ton?

Teresa: [laughs] Ton is the... the kind of pet name for the upper echelon of society, the landed gentry, the titled gentry, okay?

Travis: So sort of like the court?

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Yeah sort of, so it— there are different classes, and this is like the upper of the upper class.

Travis: Okay. So another big part of the season is the Duke has come to town, Simon.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: And he is old friends with Anthony, who is the oldest of the Bridgerton children, so there's a connection there. He is also a very eligible bachelor, real beefcake, a real stud, and—

Teresa: And his father has recently died, making him the Duke of Hastings, which is a significant land holding.

Travis: Very big deal. And then you have Daphne, who is the oldest Bridgerton daughter.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: And she is being debuted.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: Right?

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: So in the show, this is shown as like literally a parade of these eligible bachelorettes in front of the Queen, and—

Teresa: Right, so you are presented at court for your— as a debutant, your debut. And this is where we get one of another anachronism. The clothing that they are wearing is not what they would have worn at court.

Travis: Mm-hmm.

Teresa: Specifically, there were things called "court hoops," which is that like hoop skirt, right?

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: The one at the time that Queen Charlotte insisted upon was quite wide at the sides, but not as wide front and back. You make it—

Travis: Yeah, sorta like a sideways hotdog bun.

Teresa: Yeah, sure.

Travis: Yeah, it extended wide from the hips, not a lot forward or back.

Teresa: Not super wide.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Not like— We're not talking like French court.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: It was slightly smaller than that, but it was oblong, it was not circular like we would see for hoop skirts in the Victorian period. So that's one. And... you didn't have to—

Travis: What about Cressida's shoulder pads?

Teresa: [chuckles]

Travis: Would that have been standard? 'Cause Cressida is known throughout the show of wearing like very large shoulder décor.

Teresa: No.

Travis: That wasn't standard?

Teresa: Not standard.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: It is not unheard of because the puff sleeve did exist, but most of them were much closer.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Anyway. And one did not— In order to debut quote “in society,” you were the coming of age, you were declaring that you were looking for marriage, you did not have to be presented in front of the Queen at court. Although it did help, and if you were of the Ton, it was expected.

Travis: And—

Teresa: Because you are the upper echelon of society.

Travis: It’s treated in this of... much more high society and high-class version of this, but almost very much like it really gives us a clear indication right off the bat, this happens in the first episode, of like a meat market.

Teresa: A little bit.

Travis: Right? Of like you’re being paraded in front of a judge who’s gonna give like a rating, right?

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: And so what everybody’s hoping for in front of the Queen is that the Queen is gonna like be wowed, react to you.

Teresa: Right, and yet the idea of quote “the diamond of the season,” is not actually introduced by the Queen. It’s introduced by Lady Whistledown.

Travis: Yes, she says something like, “infallible” or “unapproachable” or something is like how she like describes it. “I’m looking for the person who is like oh, above everybody else,” and then Lady Whistledown I think coins the term, yeah.

Teresa: Right, of the diamond of the first water.

Travis: Now while this is going on, we also get another family, the Featheringtons.

Teresa: Oh sure, yeah.

Travis: Who live across the street.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: From the Bridgertons. Penelope is best friends with Eloise, she has... I don't wanna say a crush, I feel like that's so reductive. But that's how we're supposed to see it in the first season, right?

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: As though it's like, "Well Colin's so great. [chuckles] Penelope." She has a crush on Colin, and she is very close with the Bridgertons, they live across the street, her and Eloise have been friends forever. And Lady Featherington is debuting all three of her daughters at the same time.

Teresa: Yes, which probably means that the first daughter, the oldest daughter, is of the correct age, the middle daughter is of slightly too young, and Penelope is really far too young.

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: To be debuted. But what we come to find out later is that there is a financial reason that they are debuting all three at once.

Travis: Mm-hmm.

Teresa: They're trying to kind of like hedge their bets, to get one of them to marry.

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: So that they can get better funds.

Travis: So the overall kind of romantic arc of the season is Anthony, now in the like head of the family, you know, the man of the house kind of thing, takes it upon himself, sees it as his responsibility to get Daphne a good match.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: But he—

Teresa: His idea of a good match, and particularly his mother's idea of a good match, are completely opposite.

Travis: Yes, her— Because Lady Bridgerton and Lord Bridgerton married for love, had a very loving relationship, and their house is full of love. And I think Anthony projecting a little bit is like, "That guy's a scoundrel, that guy's a scoundrel. Oh, I know his whole deal, no way man, I've seen him at the brothels, I've seen him before."

Teresa: Well right, because Anthony has this kind of idea that he— he has to have his fingers in this pot, right?

Travis: Mm-hmm.

Teresa: And I think that... it's a very interesting dynamic that he and his mother have. Because she spends half the time telling him to step up and do what he's supposed to do, and then the other half saying "Leave us alone." [laughs]

Travis: Yes. And so that is like a conflict.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: Of like well, he needs to do it but he doesn't really know what he's doing. Anthony's my fav— Well no, Benedict's my favorite.

Teresa: Okay, yeah.

Travis: But Anthony is my second favorite by the end of season two.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: But we're not talking about that. So what the other side of it is the Duke has come to town because of his incredibly bad relationship with his father, and we find out in the season that he told his father, like on his father's death bed, "I'm never gonna marry. I'm never gonna have kids. Your line dies with me." Boom, mic drop.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: So.

Teresa: "So suck it." [laughs]

Travis: But while he's in town, every mother of every eligible daughter is like, "Hey, what's up, big guy? How's it goin'? Hey, come over—"

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: "— for gooseberry pie."

Teresa: He's beset.

Travis: And so Daphne and the Duke end up making a deal of like, "We will pretend to be courting."

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: That will make Daphne seem very desirable after her brother has scared away all the suitors.

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: And will also say like, "Well the Duke's interested in Daphne, that's why he's not pursuing any other relationships," and get all the mothers off of his back.

Teresa: Right.

Travis: Classic romantic comedy setting.

Teresa: Because— Yeah.

Travis: "We'll pretend to be in a relationship."

Teresa: And there are several romantic tropes running concurrently in this. So we've got that one, right. And we've also got the one with Simon thinking that he is unlovable, right?

Travis: Uh-huh.

Teresa: And Daphne loving him for who he is.

Travis: And the reason that they can't be together is he's not good enough for her.

Teresa: Exactly, that's another romantic trope. There's also the idea about marrying for love versus marrying for money.

Travis: Yeah, we get— So a woman has come, a young woman has come to stay with the Featherington's to be presented to the society named Marina.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: And we find out she's pregnant from a young man that she was in love with who then went off to war. So now you get this like storyline of her needing to find a match before the baby comes so that the—

Teresa: Okay, well that's another trope. [chuckles] Right?

Travis: Yeah, this is what I'm saying.

Teresa: Oh okay, I thought you were demonstrating marrying for love or for money.

Travis: No no no, I'm saying and then we also have this storyline—

Teresa: Oh yes.

Travis: — of like, "Oh, she's pregnant, we need to get this sewn up."

Teresa: And so she is helping to entrap someone, meaning that she wants them to be married before she I discovered to be pregnant, so that there's no escape for the man, right? Because if he says that it isn't his, right, then he gets ostracized as well as her.

Travis: As a cuckold.

Teresa: Right, so he has to say that it is his.

Travis: But that need to get that early enough that it makes sense.

Teresa: But they need to get that early enough that is makes sense—

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: — because not many, you know, if a— if a full-sized child pops out at—

Travis: At like two months.

Teresa: [laughs] I mean, at like six months, right?

Travis: Okay yeah, that makes more sense.

Teresa: That will not be... looked upon very heavily.

Travis: I guess if she's seven months along, they might notice.

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: People might see this.

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: Okay. And also throughout this is like the hunt for Whistledown, right?

Teresa: Right. Uhhhh...

Travis: Which like Eloise gets involved in.

Teresa: I mean, yes. It doesn't seem like anyone is doing it in earnest this season.

Travis: Eloise is.

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: Eloise is like deep in it, and the Queen is deep in it, but everybody else seems to just enjoy the ride, right? And you also get—

you get Queen Charlotte's little butler man, who I did not feel strongly about until *Queen Charlotte*, the series which we also watched, and I was like, "Oh, I love him. I love him very much, and care deeply for him."

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: "And would fight a hundred bears."

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: And but like... those are kind of the main—

Teresa: Brimsley.

Travis: Brimsley, thank you. Those are like the main, big kind of points of contention throughout this.

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: Oh, the other thing with Marina who is the young woman, she sets her sights on Colin, being like, "Oh, he's young and kinda gullible, and sweet he'll take care of me. I'm gonna like trap him into this."

And when Penelope finds out that's Marina's plan, Penelope's like, "Oh no, but I love Colin, and also... he's too nice to be trapped into a marriage like this."

Teresa: He is kind of— He is different, Marina says as much. The reason is because so like... It is expected of men in this era to be kind of standoffish about marriage.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: To want to enjoy—

Travis: A little rakish.

Teresa: — women and gambling and things like that, exactly, rakish. They're kind of like— They're supposed to be holding all of this business at like an arm's length, right?

Travis: It's like what you see with like Anthony.

Teresa: Right. But Colin does not act that way, he is quote "does not guard his affections," right?

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: He seems to be very into the idea of getting married and having a family, and just like being a very passionate, active romantic partner. And so Marina is like—

Travis: Romantic is a good like— Yeah, I think he's overly romantic in the like capital R, has romanticized the idea of like being married and having a family.

Teresa: I could talk about that as a separate episode.

Travis: We'll get there.

Teresa: Because he— not only does he have hero complex, he has self-esteem issues. Listen.

Travis: And like little boy, there's also very— One of the things I love about this show, as someone who like loves psychology, is you can like go through all of the sons basically, at least the top three sons, and be like, "So, their father's death did this to him— "

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: "— and this to him, and this to him."

Teresa: Yeah. And their ranking within their family does something to them, and what they have seen of the others does something to them.

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: And the idea of like in society where Daphne is expected to get married, although that she is younger than Colin, but everyone's like, "You're— Colin, you're too young to get married," and he's like, "But Daphne."

Travis: “Yeah, but Daphne,” and they’re like, “Well we meant your maturity.”

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: So we’re gonna talk more about this in a second, but first a word from another Max Fun show.

[transition theme music plays]

Travis: So I would also be remiss.

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: I just mentioned him.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: But Benedict, who’s the second son.

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: He’s kind of why— I love him, and the actor that portrays him is— does this really wonderful thing I think of like presenting this kind of goofy, light-hearted.

Like what you get from him is this guy who’s like clearly lived in a home where when bad stuff happens, Benedict makes a joke to break the mood, right? Benedict cheers people up, Benedict is like the fun guy of like, “Oh thank god Benedict’s here.”

Teresa: I mean some would argue that Colin is also that, but the idea of the second son is very interesting, especially in kind of like the world of the novels, right? Because he has all of the privileges, but none of the responsibility.

Travis: But! Always kind of this little sword of Damocles thing if anything happens to Anthony—

Teresa: Yes, yeah.

Travis: — at any moment. So you get that in this season where there's like a duel, and like Anthony calls Benedict up as his second, is like, "Hey, I'm either about to die, go into exile, so it's gonna be on you now." And he's like, "Uh, what?!"

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: And it's like that is not the mentality that Benedict has had. But at the same time, you get all of this like light-hearted, "I'm just here, you know, as a backup and to cheer people up, and to be everybody's best friend." But we also see him struggling because of the very nature of being the second son, with like, "What's my place?"

Teresa: Yeah, like, "What am I gonna do?" So I think that, if I'm not mistaken, second sons were usually expected to enter the priesthood.

Travis: Ew.

Teresa: I think, it was either second or third sons that were supposed to do that, and he doesn't wanna do that, we were just talking about that.

Travis: Is that because you didn't have a son to compete, so that there was no like, "Well my kid was born first, so they should be the heir?" Was it just to avoid any kind of like— Probably.

Teresa: I don't know if it was directly like that, because that doesn't really— Timeline doesn't matter as much as bloodline.

Travis: But this is what I'm saying is like what you don't want is a second son. I'm just saying that maybe it was— Just like superstitions came from like, "There's a basis for this logically."

Teresa: Oh, maybe.

Travis: I could see where it would be like, "You know, it's just easier."

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: "If you don't—" But he is... very artsy, right, he's an artist. And he doesn't have a lot of confidence in himself. And you get this thing— Is it

in this season or season two where he goes to art school? Is that season two?

Teresa: No, it's in season one, I'm pretty sure.

Travis: Well he goes to art school and then finds out he only got there because Anthony basically paid to send him there. And it's like, "Okay, cool man," I— Like I look at that as a second son—

Teresa: No, you're right.

Travis: Is it season two?

Teresa: It is season two. It is season two.

Travis: But we also see him... livin' a little bit of that Bohemian lifestyle.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: When he goes to a party and it's like, "We're all pretty open with like sex and stuff here."

Teresa: So that's one of the things— Putting *Bridgerton* aside for just a moment.

Travis: Get over there, *Bridgerton*!

Teresa: One of the things I wanna talk about as far as like we have talked about a lot of like the rigidity of the Victorian Era.

Travis: Mm-hmm.

Teresa: And this is before that, right. In the Regency. And one of the things that I think is very interesting about this period is that there are still a lot of social rules, there's a lot of social hierarchy, but when you get up to the very top.

Travis: Uh-huh.

Teresa: It's almost as if they are too rich to be bothered, right?

Travis: Right.

Teresa: That's the kinda thing where like we know that everyone at the top is going to break the rules that they've set for everyone else, that's a very Georgian thing.

Travis: Right.

Teresa: But the Georgian's were all into like partying, and like, "Do as I say, not as I do."

Travis: Well—

Teresa: And that is very telling about the Ton in this show.

Travis: Like for example right, everybody talks about marriage and the importance of marriage, right? But also, all the dudes are goin' to brothels.

Teresa: Right.

Travis: Everybody is philandering, and it's—

Teresa: And that's expected.

Travis: Yeah, it's not like a scandalous thing, right. If the ladies did it, there's a problem. But the dudes goin' to brothels and being like, "Well, I'm married, see you in a week, honey. I'm going wherever," it's like, "Okay, cool man, fine." As long as you provide for your wife.

Teresa: Right.

Travis: And you're not like cruel to her, it's usually fine.

Teresa: Which unlike in the Victorian period, Victorians were expected to actually do the things that they said—

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: — that everybody else should do, to be the pinnacle of society, right? But like in the Georgian and Regency eras, it was almost expected that of a certain rank and title, the rules do not apply.

Travis: Right, there were— But there were like rules— This is what you see throughout the show, right? And this was true in the period too, of like, “Yeah, these rules don’t apply. [with emphasis] These rules apply super hard,” right? So like we see a couple times in season one where it’s like Daphne was alone with this dude.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: That’s a problem. Colin was alone with Marina. That’s a problem.

Teresa: Yes, but only if you get caught.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: [chuckles] Really. Only if you get caught does it really matter. And like that’s the thing where like sure, Anthony has to duel the Duke because he caught them in—

Travis: He was also gonna duel what’s his face, squirrely guy?

Teresa: Pembroke?

Travis: Yes, the guy who was trying to marry her, and then like tried to force himself on her until Daphne knocked him out.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: Punched him right in the face, it’s awesome.

Teresa: So he caught them, and they are supposed to duel, but they’re trying to avoid the duel because it’s not exactly— I mean it is illegal. But—

Travis: And that was true of most of the time, right?

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: Most challenges did not end in duels, because it was like, "I'm making a show of being deeply offended by this, and if you apologize or if you do this thing, it's done."

Teresa: But... the outcome... really is dependent on the marriage, right? Daphne does love Simon, but the outlier is that she thinks that she was seen in the garden. And so she wants— she's like, "We have to get married," and Simon is like—

Travis: Well 'cause Cressida—

Teresa: Right.

Travis: Cressida hints to her like, "I saw her."

Teresa: Right, right. And Cressida could destroy, could quote "ruin her" and the family, and so like Simon doesn't wanna get married, so he says, "Let's duel." But like you know. So...

Travis: And by that point, we also get—

Teresa: The rule— Yeah.

Travis: We also get the romantic comedy thing of like we know as the audience that Simon is in love with Daphne by that point.

Teresa: Sure.

Travis: And the reason he doesn't wanna marry her is one, 'cause he like made this oath to his dad, but also 'cause he's like, "She comes from this big, happy family with all these kids, she loves her family. I have decided not to have children, right. So I can't give her this big, happy family. I can't be what she needs."

Teresa: Can't or won't.

Travis: That's a big thing.

Teresa: That's what we have talked about.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Amongst ourselves.

Travis: Where he—

Teresa: [chuckles]

Travis: Like later she says like, "You can't versus you don't want to are two different things."

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: Right?

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: It's a big thing.

Teresa: Right.

Travis: So then they get married.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: And oh man, his speech. There's a moment where they go to the Queen.

Teresa: Because they want a special license to get married faster, because normally there's a whole thing you have to go through where the call "the Bands."

In several consecutive weeks at church, they publish who is engaged, and if anyone has a problem, you need to speak up, right. It's not at the wedding that they do that, it's like, you know, "Say something now."

Travis: You have to submit your form in triplicate.

Teresa: Exactly.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: So they publish the bands, and that is supposed to be another kind of way of making sure that, I don't know, that someone isn't a fortune hunter.

Travis: Right.

Teresa: Or you know, that there isn't a scandal that would ruin a family that we need to expose, or like whatever, right?

Travis: Or like promises made, child out of wedlock, these kinds of things.

Teresa: Exactly, right. So they are supposed to publish the Bands, and you're supposed to go through that, but if you don't wanna go through that you have to get special license. Which is not necessarily from the Queen, but she does have a lot of influence in it.

Travis: Mm-hmm.

Teresa: So they apply for a special license that is rejected, not rejected by the Queen, it's rejected by the bishop, but it's because of the Queen, right?

Travis: Yeah, the Queen, it was the Queen says yes or no.

Teresa: It's the Queen because she wanted Daphne to marry her nephew, a prince, and... it was gonna be a— it was— that was looking what was gonna happen until Simon came back and was like, "But I love you."

Travis: Yes, he rode in, shirt open, chest out.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: "Hey, what's up?"

Teresa: Oh, we need to talk about the costumes too.

Travis: We will in just a second.

Teresa: Okay, okay.

Travis: I wanna finish this line, because she— When Daphne starts talking she's like, "Oh, it was love at first sight, my Queen, I love him so much. Come on, please."

And he's like, "That's not what happened," and he lays out this beautiful speech where he's just like, "We were friends first, right, like I didn't even know what love is, and then we were friends, and now like I can't live without her."

And it moves the Queen, she says yes, it's a great speech. The men in this show are given such good— Anthony gets a good one in season two. Does Colin get a good one in season three?

Teresa: Oh, definitely, several.

Travis: A lot of like, "I was dumb—"

Teresa: There are several lovely speeches by Colin.

Travis: "I was dumb, I actually love you very much, please forgive me, I'm stupid and you're great." [chuckles]

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: That's some of my favorite. Gets me every time. So, let's talk about the costumes.

Teresa: Okay. So now that we've got the kind of general plot and background, as far as like Regency and Regency versus the books, I think is a very important thing that we should talk about. Well, Regency versus the books versus the TV show.

Travis: Right.

Teresa: We would be remiss if we did not talk about how they have obviously changed a lot of the rules for TV.

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: For example, the way that they dress the character, and if you look online you can find a lot of different articles about this. I watched one by *Glamour Magazine*, right. About how they are kind of— The main characters are kind of in the same silhouettes, right? They are in the Empire waist gowns.

Travis: Which wouldn't have been.

Teresa: No, Empire waist is what—

Travis: Oh, that's real.

Teresa: It's right under the bust line.

Travis: That's real?

Teresa: Right? That is correct.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: But the fabrics are not the same. Because the fabrics that they would have worn were quite light, were quite see through, and you— there are lots of different layers of fabrics, which don't really translate well on television, right?

Travis: Mm-hmm.

Teresa: They do the layering, which I really appreciate, but they use things like you know, sequins and beading that wasn't available.

Travis: Yeah, you get a lot more detail and sparkle.

Teresa: And there would've only been like natural fibers, obviously, but they use a lot of synthetics. And also one of the things that you kind of see as you watch it but you don't clock is the main characters are dressed differently from the background.

Travis: Mm.

Teresa: Main characters are dressed to iden— to help the audience identify with them. For example, men are often shown with their collars open.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: As the main characters.

Travis: And like no cravat, no ascot.

Teresa: No, or a small tied knot. Not the high starched collars.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Unless that's speaking to their character. Anthony, in the first season, does wear a lot of those high starched collars.

Travis: Because he's tryin' to present himself—

Teresa: Exactly.

Travis: As like, "I'm, you know, the Viscount. I'm put together, I'm a—" A lot of his season one is the battle between we see him trying to be the person he thinks his father would be.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: And be this like perfect example of family leader, while we also see him struggling against the pressures of it, and like living a life having this affair with this opera singer, and feeling the pressure of what he's expected to be versus who he wants to be.

Teresa: Right.

Travis: Believing he's not allowed to be happy because he has to put other people's happiness first, all this stuff.

Teresa: So he is often shown very buttoned up, which would have been the norm. Also the colors are not exactly right. There are often times when the main characters are shown, especially the men, in dark shirts, which would not have been—

Travis: Oh yeah, the Duke is always in like scarlets and like evergreen and—

Teresa: Well his— the waistcoat, the “waist-kit” as they say, would have been very differentiating between each person. That was considered the personality.

Travis: Mm-hmm.

Teresa: Of your outfit. You would have the breeches and the boots, then you would have the waistcoat which is— which could be highly patterned, it could be decorated, it could be different colors and different fabrics and things like that.

And then you would have the coat and tails. Which was normally a darker color, but you would have— always have the white shirt. And normally it would have ruffles at the front and it would be tied up with a cravat very high up under the chin and things like that, right?

But if you watch the show with an eye for the background characters, they are always dressed appropriately, right?

Travis: Yeah, they’re always starched and.

Teresa: High starched collars and they often have walking sticks, and the tall hats and things. Hats especially are a way to differentiate between the main characters and the background characters.

Travis: I just smiled ‘cause I was picturing like the rare times where Anthony is suddenly in a big top hat.

Teresa: Right.

Travis: And it’s like, “I don’t like that, but eh.”

Teresa: It—

Travis: Listen, as a man.

Teresa: It feels weird to us.

Travis: As a man who most— like any kind of decorative costume hat has always been a struggle for me. Every time I've been cast in something where it's like, "And we'll have you wear a hat," and it's like, "I hope you have a hat that not only fits my giant head—"

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: "— but doesn't look— doesn't make me look like Baby New Year from *Rudolph's Shiny New Year*." And it's like, "Well we have this one that will fit."

Teresa: Here's the one.

Travis: And I'm like, "Let's see." And so every time they put Anthony in a hat, I'm like that makes him look like he's wearing his dad's suit.

Teresa: Right.

Travis: Don't— Please take that hat off him.

Teresa: But the background characters do wear hats, the women do wear bonnets, as they would have. The bonnet specifically does not translate very well to television.

Travis: You can't see their face!

Teresa: You cannot. I mean—

Travis: It would make— Every shot would have to be straightforward, you wouldn't have any side profile 'cause it would like extend past their face. It would make everybody seem very mysterious.

Teresa: Right, and this is a difference between *Bridgerton* television show and other like BBC dramas, right. They do often wear bonnets in the BBC dramas, but they're always like taking them off or putting them on, or like... especially the Regency bonnet was quite narrow, and sometimes they'll change it to a more flared bonnet, just so that you can [chuckles] see their faces on television, right.

Travis: Well this is part of what I think honestly makes good— So for what *Bridgerton* is as a style show, right?

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: Where they're not going for period appropriate, historically accurate, right? What I think they do really well and one of the reasons I really like the costuming in *Bridgerton* is I think that they look at the period through a modern lens.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: And so you get like if this style was run through a filter of 2020.

Teresa: Right.

Travis: This is what it would look like. Right, so they're not going wildly, you know, of like everybody's wearing evening gowns with slits up the side, and like you know, décolletage. It—

Teresa: There's a lot of décolletage.

Travis: There is a lot of décolletage.

Teresa: Which is period appropriate. [chuckles]

Travis: But more— Or I guess plunging deep V or whatever.

Teresa: Right.

Travis: So you're— they're saying like, "We're gonna take the period style."

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: "But adapt it to what it would look like today," kinda thing, you know what I mean?

Teresa: Right, right.

Travis: So it's like— it all feels like a very stylistic, practical choice.

Teresa: And they do sprinkle in a lot of the historical stuff. For example, Lady Bridgerton is shown wearing a kind of shawl, kind of crisscrossed overtop of her neck, right? Tucked into a dress. That was definitely something that one would be expected to wear in the morning, right. Because less décolletage in the morning. They also show, as part of—

Travis: Décolletage in the morning, sailor take warning.

Teresa: Ooo.

Travis: Décolletage at night.

Teresa & Travis: [simultaneously] Sailor's delight.

Travis: Yeah. It actually works. Okay, go ahead.

Teresa: And there's also a special cropped jacket called a "spencer," which a lot of the people wear.

Travis: Especially with the high waist, right?

Teresa: Exactly, yeah.

Travis: Of both the pants and the dresses, right? It's like you don't want like a super long coat—

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: — to go over that, 'cause then it would completely defeat the purpose of having that line.

Teresa: Right, and there are male and female spencers in the show.

Travis: Mm-hmm.

Teresa: That's the—

Travis: The Duke can wear a hat.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: The Duke pulls off a hat very well, just for reference. I really love the way that they dress Benedict in the thing.

Teresa: Mmm.

Travis: Because he has a very almost like... Bo Brummell, or like a Vander Holly, the King of Dudes I think was his name. But like this thing of like he feels very... foppish, he feels very— Like he'll flump down into a chair, right? Where when Anthony sits down, it's very— it feels starched, right? It feels buttoned up.

Teresa: I think that that is something that *Bridgerton* does very well in order to relate, right? Is like there's like the kind of outward presentation of very buttoned up, high society, right? And then but in their living rooms, they do things like slouch on couches, and eat non-daintily, and put their feet up on furniture.

Travis: And kind of like bicker with each other.

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: And like... It— They nail sibling feelings in this show very well. Every conversation, I think it gets better and better too as seasons go on. The conversations like between Anthony and Colin.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: Or Colin and Benedict, Benedict and Eloise, Anthony and Bene— Like it always feels like these people have a rhythm of talking to— they have an established thing where like they'll needle each other and they'll get mad at each other, but like it never feels like huge spikes or valleys.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: It's like, "Yeah, this is the waves that we go through all the time."

Teresa: I think that is— that's also present directly in the books.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: This— The relationship between them, which I think is really great.

Travis: You get a big thing too of like they do a lot of like class and like misogyny and stuff discussion when you see Daphne and Eloise interacting.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: Where what you get is this dichotomy of like Daphne saying “I’m not doing this for like the frippery of it, right. This is like how I establish, how I get security, how we like move forward, and how the family is protected, by caring about this stuff. This is how we exist in society,” right.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: “This is what gives me power to do things, is by achieving like a good marriage and all this stuff.” And then you have Eloise on the other side saying like, “But that kinda thing, I don’t want that, I wanna achieve power and security and stuff on my own terms, by moving forward.”

And it’s like hey, both of those things make sense as like ways to look at the world, and it causes a lot of friction between the two of them.

Teresa: Mm-hmm. And it’s, you know, Daphne also has a great speech where she’s talking about how like, “This is the one thing that I’ve been raised my entire life to do.”

Travis: Mm-hmm.

Teresa: “Is to marry well,” right. Like, “This is the whole of my existence, and I’m not—” She doesn’t seem like opposed to it. She... But she also doesn’t seem like resigned to it.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: There’s a very good balance, I think, where they talk about how like she is trying to make the best of her circumstances, the best way she knows how.

Travis: Right. It should also be noted, if you haven't watched this show, there is— it's so funny at times.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: And there's some great humor. And there's like a thing that happens I wanna say a couple different times, but like for example, Penelope and Eloise find out Marin's pregnant, and they're like, "But she's not married. How's that even work?" And we see a bunch of—

Teresa: Oh, that's a whole thing.

Travis: We see a bunch of scenes of them going around like, "How does someone even get married outside of—" And eventually Marina I think tells Eloise like, "I got married because of love— Or I got pregnant because of love," and Eloise is like, "What? How does that even work?"

And then you have when Daphne is getting married to the Duke and she's like trying to ask her mom like, "How... does it work with the stuff?" and her mom is very like, "Uh, there's— Uh, it's a feeling of like autumn rain," [chuckles] and like stuff.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: And it's like, "What? What are you talking about?"

Teresa: That I think is also very present in the books, and is period appropriate. Men were often educated as to the science of conception, right?

Travis: Mm-hmm.

Teresa: And also they were allowed to explore that part of relationships.

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: Whereas—

Travis: In the brothel.

Teresa: In the brothel, indeed. Whereas women were expected. I would say that yes their mothers tell them something, but they certainly don't explain how their— like their monthly cycle works.

Travis: Mm-hmm.

Teresa: They don't explain how... babies are made in a very intimate way, right.

Travis: That's even like a bi— that's a pretty big plot point—

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: — that comes up in the Daphne and the Duke's marriage.

Teresa: It does.

Travis: Because she is convinced that when he says he can't give her children, that she believes he means he's physically incapable of it.

Teresa: Right, but she doesn't even quite understand how that works.

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: And he kind of takes advantage of that, but—

Travis: Then she takes advantage of him too.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: So warning, if you haven't watched it, there is some stuff that happens later of her like... forcing him in regards to them like having sex in like forcing him to, for lack of a better word, finish with her. And then that's a huge plot point, so like that's—

Teresa: Right.

Travis: There's a— There's lots of discussions around that in regards to the show.

Teresa: But like it is apropos of the time.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Where women were not told a lot of these things, and what seems to happen also in literature of the time, is that [chuckles] the consensus is “Well, of course they didn’t tell us about this, or the entirety of society would crumble,” right?

Because there are lots of very pleasurable things about the relationships that they dream of, right. And physically, the idea is that if women were allowed to know about these things, they wouldn’t care about having to be quote “pure” until marriage.

Travis: Mm-hmm.

Teresa: And like society would crumble, and like all of the rules that they put in place about touching—

Travis: ‘Cause women would be like, “Wait, what? There’s what now?”

Teresa: Exactly.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: If they—

Travis: There’s also— I bet that it—

Teresa: If they only knew what they were missing. [chuckles]

Travis: I also guarantee that there’s a layer of it of like dudes who are like, “Okay, but if our future wives are allowed to experience this with other people... they might find out that I am not good at it.”

Teresa: Mmm, maybe.

Travis: “And that makes me ner— I don’t wanna be compared to anybody else, ‘cause I’ll be nervous. And so instead we’re just gonna make strict rules about it.”

Teresa: Right, but also just like the lack of education.

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: Right?

Travis: And a lot of religious stuff too.

Teresa: I mean, this particular period in history, in English history, there isn't lot of religious kind of overtones.

Travis: But there's baggage, and there— All— Here's what I'm saying is like even when a society is in a kind of like down period of religion, there's still centuries of religious influence—

Teresa: Yes, yes.

Travis: — leading up to it.

Teresa: And I would say that... religion does kind of shape the... the rules of society in an indirect way—

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: — in this period. It is very similar to like the kind of like chased woman part, but I would think that religion plays a bigger, more... vocal role in Victorian society.

Travis: Oh, definitely.

Teresa: Than it does in Georgian and Regency.

Travis: I— Yeah, 100%. I don't really wanna fully reveal like the end of season one, 'cause it's like the thing that is like the question throughout, but the Duke and Daphne end up working it out, right? They figure it out, it's great.

At which point, it ends with Anthony being like, "So glad you're happy, but I'll never get married" Wink, to the audience, season two— The Porky Pig circle closes in on him.

Teresa: [laughs] Because—

Travis: "And Anthony will be back—"

Teresa: Because—

Travis: "— in season two of *Bridgerton*."

Teresa: — season two is like his thing, yeah.

Travis: And frankly, of the three seasons, season two if my favorite.

Teresa: Oh, really? Yeah, no you've told me about this, I remember.

Travis: I've told you, like the... the kind of like *Pride & Prejudice*-esque like, "These two can't stand each other thing," really gets me.

Teresa: Again, that's a really common Regency trope.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: The enemies to lovers trope.

Travis: It— Oh my god. Also the two of them together, great. Waaaah, season two, awwww, I have such strong feelings about season two. I think season three is your favorite.

Teresa: Season three is my favorite.

Travis: Yeah. Although I'm excited because season four, which is apparently coming in 2026, ugh, is about Benedict.

Teresa: Well it takes a while. Yes.

Travis: It's Benedict.

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: I'm excited about that.

Teresa: They did the books out of order in the TV show. So Daphne and Anthony are books one and two, and then they skipped book three... and

made book four season three, but book three is now season four, and that's a Cinderella story.

Travis: Yes. And Hyacinth also has a thing in season three.

Teresa: Hyacinth?

Travis: Is that— No, not Hyacinth, not Hyacinth. Uh, bu— fi— F.

Teresa: Eloise?

Travis: No.

Teresa: No, Francesca.

Travis: Francesca.

Teresa: Yeah, okay.

Travis: But we don't have to talk about that because we're not talking about season three.

Teresa: Right, I see.

Travis: This is me saying if you— We're wrapping up now. If you enjoyed us talking—

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: — talking *Bridgerton*, *Smidgerton* part one, and you would like us to do more—

Teresa: Oooo, *Shmidgerton*.

Travis: *Smidgerton*, part one. If you want us to do more of these, we would be absolutely happy to. There's season two, season three, *Queen Charlotte*, so much. Comment on the Instagram post, email us shmannerstcast@gmail.com and say, "Please do more of that." [clicks tongue] You're welcome, we'll do it.

Let's see, thank you to our researcher Alex, without whom we could not make this show. Thank you to our editor Rachel, without whom we could not make this show. Thank you to you for listening, dearest gentle readers.

Teresa: Ooo!

Travis: See, 'cause that's what she says!

Teresa: That's what she says.

Travis: That's what she says! Make sure you go to bit.ly/mcelroytours, and *My Brother*, *My Brother and Me* and *The Adventure Zone* are coming to Florida, February I wanna say 20th through 22nd, so go get your tickets for that. It's our first *Adventure Zone* in Florida. Go to mcelroymerch.com, we have a... "Keep Doing Good" shirt there, and a bunch of stuff, go check it out.

And if you wanna come join us at a castle in Hawking Hills, Ohio. I say us, Teresa won't be there, but I'll be there and some great guests, and a bunch of nerds playing great board games and table games and stuff. Go to championsgrove.com, that's Memorial Day weekend, come hang out with us there. What else, Teresa? What am I forgetting?

Teresa: We always thank Brent "Brentalfloss" Black for writing our theme music, which is available as a ringtone where those are found. Also thank you to Bruja Betty Pin Up Photography for the cover picture of our fan-run Facebook group, Shmanners Fanners. If you love to give and get excellent advice from other fans, go ahead and join that group today.

And Travis suggested emailing, and that email address is shmannerscast@gmail.com. There we would love to hear if you wanna hear more about *Bridgerton*, if you wanna hear more about Regency in general, if have other questions or queries or topic suggestions or idioms, we love to do idioms, things like that. Send those to Alex because she reads every single one.

Travis: And that's gonna do it for us, so join us again next week.

Teresa: No RSVP required.

Travis: You've been listening to *Shmanners*.

Teresa: Manners, shmanners... get it?

[outro theme music plays]

[ukulele chord]

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